

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA



Idealism and Social Progress

Being an Inaugural Lecture

BY

HENRY W. WRIGHT

Professor of Philosophy and Social Ethics

Winnipeg, 1921



Idealism and Social Progress

Philosophy, like all other branches of knowledge, has its own distinctive field; the most celebrated philosophers have held this to be a higher sphere of reality with which it is the special prerogative of philosophy to make its students acquainted. We are all aware of certain distinctions in our way of looking at things that mark off in a rough fashion the field of philosophy from the world of everyday perception and the world of physical science as well. With the world of our common perception, the world in which we move during the most of our waking moments, the world of objects related to our sentient organisms and our natural desires, of the things we eat and wear, that shelter us and carry us about, of the beings with whom we exchange greetings, carry on conversation and transact business, we are all perfectly familiar, so familiar that we should find it difficult on first thought to conceive of any other world at all. But if we remind ourselves of what we know of the methods and conclusions of the physical sciences, which reduce colors and sounds to terms of vibrations and all perceptible changes in the physical universe to manifestations of one energy, we shall have to admit recognition of another world in which the qualities which give interest and meaning to the every-day world disappear and their place is taken by material atoms and their various modes of motion. And finally, if our attention is directed to the objects of moral endeavor and religious aspiration, we must acknowledge that these belong to neither of the two worlds just mentioned and that consequently a third sphere must be recognised to which belong our personal ideals, those authoritative standards of truth and goodness beauty that govern our lives so far as these are intelligent, and claim both place and influence in the total scheme of things.

It is true that philosophy of the idealistic tradition with which you are perhaps most familiar, has proposed to introduce its students to a realm at once higher and more real than the common-sense world or the mechanical order of science, a realm in which our reason discovers those ideal principles which determine the character of everything that exists. You will concede, I imagine, that philosophy in this sense plays a useful part in the process of education: it gives the growing mind some needed discipline in dealing with abstract ideas and, by encouraging it to strain after the incomprehensible, teaches the limits of man's mental grasp; it has also an elevating and edifying effect upon the character of the student, turning his attention away from the clamorous confusion of the sense-world and fixing his thought upon the ideal aspirations of his intellectual and moral nature. But if you were asked to consider this ideal world of the philosopher's vision as something more than the object of aspiration, and to say how real it seemed to you to be, you would have to confess that it appeared as the height of *unreality*, a field of abstractions, remote, unsubstantial and elusive. "What philosophers say sounds reasonable enough," a scientist friend of mine once said, "And I think I understand you when you talk about it, but it makes no impression on my mind, because it is all so vague—there is nothing definite there, that you can put your finger on."

This failure on the part of philosophical idealism to produce a realizing conviction, and to influence human life in a controlling way, is due in part, I believe, to the manner of its formulation. Interested in defining and accentuating the difference between the ideal and the actual, idealism has failed to trace out and illuminate the points of contact and connection between the two. Pre-occupied with the opposition between the ideal and the actual, it has tended to remove the ideal to a world of its own, a separate and supernatural sphere. If the ideal is to be understood as in every respect the opposite of the actual, then the contrast will hold at every point: the world of sense-perception if imperfect is at least actual; the ideal world, although perfect, is unreal. Thus idealism

evaporates into a sentiment and an aspiration—the admiring contemplation of absolute Truth and Goodness and Beauty. Such criticism is, to be sure, quite beside the mark when directed against much of modern idealism, whose effort is to discover and systematize the rational principles which disclose themselves in the unfolding experience of man. Not even this type of idealism succeeds, however, in making clear the relation between the ideal system on the one hand, and the psycho-physical organism through which man comes to a knowledge of these rational principles, on the other. But the new knowledge which we have gained from the scientific studies of the last half-century in regard to the conditions under which human intelligence has developed and its function in social organization helps us to make this connection and thus to bring idealism down from the clouds and to relate it to the practical concerns of worldly existence. Because I do believe that idealism is capable of pointing the way to a solution of the menacing social problems that threaten to overthrow our civilization, I propose in the first part of my discussion to restate its fundamental principles in the light of human evolution and the facts of social adjustment.

Of the bodily structures that distinguish man from the lower animals three are of particular importance as conditions and instrumentalities of his social experience. The first is his apparatus of articulate speech. The second is the increased facility given to the senses of sight and hearing by the assumption of the erect posture, along with correlated adjustments of head and neck muscles, changes which enable the human individual to meet his fellow face to face, and to survey steadily or with sweeping gaze the objects of his environment. The third is the perfected hand and arm, made possible by the erect posture, which gives man power to contrive and fashion tools, with which he constructs utilities out of natural materials and thus transforms his physical surroundings. These structures like all other bodily characters were primarily instruments of adaptation; they served to adjust the human species to its environment, to increase its chances of survival and to

raise it to its present position of mastery over living races. But they served another and a higher purpose; they were instruments of communication between human beings. Now it is this process of communication that especially interests us, for communication is, as I wish to show, the basis of social life, of *community*, as it is very properly called. May we consider briefly the three kinds of communication that are opened to men by the bodily developments just mentioned?

Through speech men communicate their experiences. By experiences are meant items of consciousness; but not all items of consciousness are communicable. Organic reactions, motor tensions, the leap of vitality, the throb of pain, although felt by the individual, are not subjects of communication, save by inarticulate cry. To be communicated in the true sense an experience must have a meaning that is intelligible to at least two persons; by virtue of this meaning expressed in articulate speech the experience is really shared by as many individuals as are party to the communication. How do experiences acquire this meaning? Mere sensations or complexes of sensation aroused by the physical stimulation of bodily organs do not possess it; these are states of consciousness in a particular individual, nothing more. These sensations which follow one another with bewildering rapidity and in ever-shifting combinations become intelligible when such as serve a common purpose or promise a similar satisfaction in the continuing life of an individual conscious of his own identity, are correlated by this common quality. Such correlation stamps them with a distinctive and permanent character, symbolized by a name, which the individual assumes they will show to others as well as himself. He assumes this simply because he attributes to other men the same power of rational foresight that he himself possesses, the power, that is, of projecting in the form of ideas the permanent possibilities of satisfaction and fulfillment that the actual world holds forth to a conscious self. Thus we see that it is the *unity of reason or rational will* that makes it possible for men to communicate by spoken words, and that the matter communicated consists of such qualities in

such connections as could under proper conditions be experienced by all individuals. Because they are assumed to be universally verifiable these experiences are freed from the limitations of subjective fancy and given the standing of objective fact. Such objects constitute even the simplest matter of social interchange: things, such as tree and house and river; conditions, such as hunger and thirst and fatigue; actions, such as walking and eating, striking and throwing. None of these objects, from the time when their names were first spoken by men, are unrelated particulars, single items of an individual's experiencing. They are experiences correlated by the common interest which they have for a unitary self which maintains its identity through the changing play of sensory stimulation and which assumes that these meanings, which it finds in its experiences, will be intelligible to all other selves as well. Thus, in connection with articulate speech there arises a new world of intelligible meanings which, although it is at first a world of sense-objects, is organized by principles which cannot be explained in physical terms. These principles are rooted in the relation which all human experiences bear to the one conscious self which organizes them in order to possess them, and their communicability depends upon, and bears witness to, the further fact that this self-conscious intelligence is common to all individuals, is in fact, a social intelligence.

At first, verbal communication was limited, we must suppose, to the interchange by individuals of their own experiences. But soon oral tradition took its rise, through which men learned of the deeds and sufferings of ancestors and heroes of the remote past. Thus the world of social interchange enlarged and man's intellectual vision extended to take in other generations than his own, times long dead and places far distant. But always the requirements of rationality were operative—these reputed deeds and purported happenings must cohere with the order of events open directly or indirectly to the experiencing of all. Definite criteria of truth and probability became effective and, when the invention of writing made verbal transmission more accurate, tradition gave place to history and

science. The ideal of a system of ideas or concepts comprehensive enough to represent all objects open to possible conscious experience, the ideal of truth, dawned upon the mind of man; and a more systematic correlation of experiences was undertaken. It was seen that the relations which intelligence establishes among objects are of two main kinds: either they may be related to the conditions under which they are experienced, their causes, or to the further experiences to which they open the way, their values. Thus the two branches of science, descriptive and normative, were distinguished. The objectivity of the first, the order of physical causation, is unchallenged. But that of the second, the realm of ends, is every whit as real, even if its organization is less akin to the familiar world of sense and hence less easily imaginable than the first. It is the true spiritual world, the system of objects domestic, educational, religious, political, which man in his social life is realizing and for which he must claim some enduring place in the total scheme of reality. These facts which I am presenting are in a certain way familiar to us all but familiarity in this case has tended to obscure their real wonder and significance. Through the power of verbal and written communication culminating in history and science the human individual of to-day is made sharer in the experiences of humanity, of his fellows in all ages from the dark and shadowy past when he hunted the mammoth with clumsy weapons and decorated the walls of his cave with rude drawings, down the ages when he fought with unquestioning loyalty for half-understood causes on nameless battlefields or doggedly worked with crude implements and roundabout methods to wrest a poor crop from the unwilling soil, to the very present when he sits in judgment upon his own history.

A second form of communication is established by the development of man's senses of sight and hearing as faculties of esthetic perception. What is communicated by this means consists not of ideas but of emotions. As we well know, certain visible objects and combinations of sound have the power of setting our perceptual and imaginative faculties in such free and harmonious play as to

produce a species of pleasure that we call the enjoyment of beauty. This is not a purely subjective feeling like the pleasure which results from the satisfaction of instinctive desire. The objects in which we take pleasure as beautiful are such as are capable through their power of stimulating the imagination, of expressing a meaning which, although it usually lies too deep for words, is nevertheless intelligible. Because the beautiful object is thus intelligently expressive it has the power of suggesting to different individuals whose emotions it stirs the same profound if inarticulate meaning. It offers, moreover, to the individual capable of creating it, a means for transmitting to his fellows the feelings engendered in his own consciousness by the facts of our common human lot. Such is the office of art in the social life of man. Perhaps the simplest as well as the most primitive type of esthetic communication is through the changing shades of facial expression and the intonations and modulations of the human voice. Both are marvellous instruments for the interchange of emotion. How much is human intercourse enriched by the fact that the feelings which we betray in feature and in voice when confronted by a special situation are answered to by the quick change which a like feeling produces on the countenance of a friend or associate who understands! But from almost the very beginning, man's efforts to objectify and communicate his emotions through artistic creation constitute one of the most distinctive and significant features of his social life. He decorates the walls of his lodge and carves the handle of his weapon; he composes chants and dirges, and elaborates ceremonial dances. The social import of this altogether escapes us, however, if we think of artistic creation and aesthetic creation merely as giving outlet to a feeling or as serving some natural utility. They are socially significant because the emotions they communicate have suggestions that spring from the depths of our common experience as rational beings, confronted by a world to which we are both alien and akin.

The two kinds of communication of which I have spoken, intellectual and aesthetic, are identical with the two leading departments of culture and, along with

religious sentiment, cover the whole field of culture as this is usually understood. It may surprise you, therefore, to have practical or technical construction introduced as a third form of social culture, since, as it has been traditionally conceived, culture has nothing to do with outward action. This is presumably because action is identified with the outward movements by which individuals seek satisfaction for their particular needs, while the aims of true culture, knowledge and beauty, are universal ideals pursued by the inner activities of spirit. But, as we now recognise, both intellectual and esthetic activities have bodily means of expression, and we well know that knowledge may be sought and art cultivated for selfish and mercenary motives. And, on the other hand, action may have a purpose as comprehensive and humane as thought and when it does, as I wish now to show, it involves communication of the true type. Whenever we know the purpose that prompts an action which comes under our observation the acts that we observe are intelligible to us: we understand them as *means* to the desired end. Inasmuch as these acts take place in the outer world and depend upon physical forces and properties with which we are all familiar, we can imagine ourselves repeating the acts if it served our purpose to do so. Now if the acts, which we thus understand, do not merely follow old and familiar lines, but reveal inventiveness and ingenuity on the part of the actor, we watch with a lively, impartial interest, being curious to learn, perchance, of some new method or device for accomplishing the particular operation. See how intently the gathering crowd on a city street watches the movements of two workmen who, engaged in demolishing a building, stand now on a brick wall and with cautious and tentative movements of their crowbars endeavor to dislodge and topple over the edge of the wall a steel beam without such damage to the wall as would endanger their own safety. The attentive observers respond sympathetically to every movement, making instantaneous estimate of its adequacy and probable results. Let us notice next that we are familiar, in a general way at least, with the purposes that move men

to act and this because we have all of us the same fundamental interests—interests in the means of subsistence, in agreeable companionship, in family ties, in safe and speedy means of communication and transportation, in a secure and orderly walk of life. Our own instincts and ideals, consequently, enable us to interpret fairly well the actions of others, and this knowledge of the leading human interests and purposes is extended and clarified by the constant discussion that goes on among men concerning their aims and intentions. Thus a broad community of purpose is established among human individuals by the traits of human nature and the conditions of social existence. Now let us suppose that men not merely have such an understanding of the meaning of one another's acts, but that several of them agree to work together to accomplish one object. All follow the same general methods of operation, which are understood and taken for granted. Within these limits of the common procedure, however, each exercises his own freedom and originality in devising improved means for doing his part. But each works in the presence, and with the knowledge, of the activity of the others, and receives from the ingenuity they exercise suggestions for improving his own methods. Thus out of the give and take of practical invention and intelligent appreciation there arises a new efficiency which is accompanied by the thrill of concerted achievement—that sense of team play, of which team-mates in athletic sports tell us, when the individuals engaged, without sacrificing their own initiative but rather by means of it, are knit together by the common purpose they serve into one supremely effective organism. Such is co-operation, the form which communication takes in the field of action.

The inventor, the organizer, the statesman, the reformer in the industrial and economic, the political and moral fields, although their constructive work may in many cases be carried on, to the external eye, in complete seclusion, are nevertheless masters of this type of communication. Their creative powers are stimulated by a social need: the object sought by their fellows in some field of human endeavor interests them, becomes their

absorbing preoccupation, and evokes their inventive skill. The end they seek is universal; whether clearly recognized or not, it is human welfare, the interest of associated humanity. What they communicate is, of course, no material thing, or particular sequence of movements or sounds, not this tool or device or machine, nor that graven tablet of laws or social ceremonial or salutary regimen; their achievement is ideal, an ideal that is realized. It is a new human use, tried and established, for forces present and operative in the physical environment and the human organism, but now combined in a new way that can be generally applied and repeated at will; it is a new adjustment and adaptation of existing materials to purposes that all men can understand and appreciate. Because of their rational character and appeal these inventions can be socially appropriated; all men can participate in their use. From the social environment the inventor, reformer or organizer receives his problem and his inspiration; from him society learns a new method of employing natural forces in the service of rational life. Furthermore, mechanical inventions, industrial methods, political procedures and ethical institutions, produced in the spirit of co-operation, are themselves sources of co-operation among those who use them. Standardizing procedure as they do in the different departments of action, they make it possible for men to perform the great tasks of life in unison. If they involve the control of the forces of nature on a large scale (as in the case of machinery), their employment calls for the concerted activity of large numbers of individuals who are thus brought into the co-operative relation and encouraged to use their skill as individuals in serving the social enterprise. It must be admitted, however, that although great progress has been made in the organization of mankind for the purposes of industry and government, the co-operation of men in many fields of practise is still a matter of the hand rather than of the heart. Because the essential identity of the personal interests of humanity which, as a presupposition of our moral will, underlies all co-operation, still fails of universal recognition, the associated efforts of men in many fields, do not rise above the

uniformity of technical routine. Two requirements must be fulfilled before industrial and political co-operation can realize their full possibilities as modes of intelligent communication: the aim or purpose of the whole enterprise, economic or political, must be such as to enlist the understanding and approval of those employed, and the methods of operation such as to give some opportunity to the individuals engaged, of exercising initiative and inventiveness in the discharge of its prescribed routine.

The meaning of my statement that communication is the basis of social life has, I trust, been made somewhat clearer to you. You see how superficial recent attempts to explain human association by referring it to the operation of instinct are certain to be. The so-called social instincts, those of sex and parenthood, the sympathetic and gregarious instincts, play an important part, to be sure, in assembling human beings in larger and smaller groups and in determining their reactions when in one another's presence. But the social life itself is participation in the social order, which is different from the natural order and which may properly be called idea, not because it is unreal, but because it is organized by the one rational will which is expressing itself in the experience and activity of men. Its objects are not the objects of sense-perception which change and vary with every shift of visual perspective and every alteration of bodily position; they are objects which because classified in accordance with essential and enduring qualities may and do claim reality for every sane mind; they may be realized by every rational being who observes the appropriate conditions; the social world is in sober fact the realm of ends or rational purposes. The processes recognized by this higher order of social intelligence are not the changes that come and go in the field of sense-perception, they are those sequences which intelligent experimentation discovers to be fixed and necessary, whose result may be predicted and which may be utilized as means by all rational agents in the attainment of their purposes. Its shapes and colors and tones are not the haphazard array that the rational world presents to the senses but such harmonies and proportions

and modulations as every rational percipient feels to be meaningful and significant. This is the world in which we as intelligent persons develop and find satisfaction. We must find it together, for at every point the social world is built upon and presupposes the intercommunication of conscious selves; it is one world, we are privileged to participate in it, each retaining his own point of view and undertaking his own task.

While the basis of human association in the true sense is rational rather than instinctive it is true that the instincts do bring human individuals into contact and interaction and thus provide occasion and incentive for the realization of social values. Thus the food instinct assembling men at first in the hunt or the search incites them to systematic industry which gives opportunity for co-operation and comradeship. The gregarious instinct reinforced by self-preservation driving men together, and the instincts of leadership and subjection impelling them to some form of group organization, provide occasion and encouragement for the interchange of ideas and the growth of mutual understanding. The instincts of sex and parenthood constituting the closely-knit family group induce emotional accord as well as mutual helpfulness and sympathy. In connection with these various instincts, then the social intelligence of man finds objective expression through his bodily powers of speech, practical construction and organization, and artistic perception and creation. The results are handed down from generation to generation, as the objective expression or material embodiment of social culture, a constantly increasing social heritage which gives each successive generation an advantage over the last, and links them all together in the unity of progressive achievement. This social heritage which we frequently call civilization consists, in the intellectual field, of inscriptions and records and books, in the industrial and economic sphere, of tools and machines and technical processes, in the political sphere of customs and institutions laws and procedures, in the esthetic field of the products of fine art in its different branches. So impressive in its sum-total, it gives rational meaning to our lives, for it

places us in communication with countless numbers and generations of our fellows who have in their times worked and played, rejoiced and suffered, even as we. With them direct communication is denied us, we may not catch the flash of understanding in their eyes nor answer to their voices, nor respond to the vigor and direction of their movements, but we may communicate with them indirectly through the enduring memorials they have left: through their writings we may see the world with their eyes, learn of their ideas, and gain understanding of their point of view; through intelligent and public-spirited participation in the organized industrial system and the institutions of family, church, and state, we enter into working partnership with the inventors, lawgivers, reformers, and statesmen who in former times have striven and suffered in the hope of an elevated humanity and a bettered world; when we appreciate the works of art which are priceless products of the past we feel that sense of the larger significance of things which inspired their creation. These, the products of civilization are not, to be sure, themselves culture, which is a thing of the spirit, but they are the necessary objective expression of social intelligence. They are to be looked upon as extensions in the physical world of the bodily powers of speech and practical construction and esthetic appreciation, and in this case body shows itself to be not the handicap and antagonist of spirit, but its servant and helper. For how else could the insights, the inventions, the creations of rational will which is always individual and subjective be communicated to others and handed down as the permanent possession of society except through the instrumentality of physical processes that are at once matter of common perception, and continue uniform in their working? Matter then provides the common background of permanence and uniformity that is required if the creations of intelligent individuals, each of whom works freely and from an original point of view, are to be woven into a single social pattern.

The modern era, as we know, has been one of rapid advance in most if not all branches of social culture. We

are all familiar with the astonishing growth of natural science and the marvellous progress of mechanical invention; we are less likely, perhaps, to think of recent developments in other lines of thought such as pure mathematics and psychology and economics, and such practical fields as those of social organization and political administration. But, as remarkable as such achievements have been in enlarging the content of social culture, even more notable are recent improvements in the means of social transmission. Through the circulation of books, periodicals and newspapers, and the multiplication of libraries, through popular education and the increasing popularity of higher education, through the educational processes of democratic government and the systematic publicity which has come to accompany business and industry, the discoveries and inventions of human intelligence in all departments are made immediately available for effective use by members of each generation on a scale which our ancestors in previous ages would have deemed quite impossible. The result has been an increase in the power of man over his surroundings, both physical and social, which in its unlimited possibilities marks out time as perhaps the critical period in human history. The war brought home to us with startling emphasis the tremendous possibilities of this power when used by the modern nation made for the time really one by a single purpose, concentrating all its thought upon devising means of warfare and applying its co-ordinated energies in the production and employment of the weapons thus invented. Indeed some have seen in this proof of the power which modern science and technical invention have placed in the hands of organized humanity the most impressive fact of the war. To a lesser degree, of course, but with vast potencies for good or evil, this same power is bestowed by social intelligence upon the individual of to-day who is capable of understanding and employing the instrumentalities it has created. To whatever field he turns, he finds knowledge organized and classified for his use, accessible to his investigation and ready for employment as a tool. In the world of business and industry he finds a great operative system whose

methods and processes, based upon numberless inventions and adjustments, offer to men capable of mastering its intricate interplay the opportunity for amassing wealth in amounts undreamed by the avarice of previous times. The civilized state of to-day frequently seems by virtue of size and mechanical complexity to have become estranged from itself, to have lost its soul in fact; but, depending as it does upon modern methods of communication and publicity, and intimately connected with an organized and interlocking industrial system, it opens to individuals capable of commanding its various forces, economic, psychological and ethical, a way to fame and influence unprecedented in human history.

Whether this power which social progress has placed in the hands of civilized man in this generation is to benefit him and the race depends entirely upon the use which he makes of it. No doubt that it is itself a product of social intelligence and co-operative enterprise. Because man could and did think in general terms, correlating the facts of his experience in such ways as others could verify and act upon, because he could in consequence predict the outcome of natural processes and imagine the result when existing forces were combined in new ways, thus inventing machines and devising methods that his fellows could understand and use, he has conquered the land and the sea and the air, and has learned to touch skilfully the springs of action which are deep embedded in the human instinctive endowment. These achievements which in our day have come to full fruition, represent man's social heritage; they crown the efforts of countless generations of our fellows who have labored farsightedly and heroically to subdue the circumstances of earthly existence to the uses of human intelligence. But this fact that the machinery of civilization has originated in social intelligence and fulfils a rational purpose, while it does create an obligation, by no means secures its fulfillment in the use of these instrumentalities for the general welfare of mankind. Just here lies the danger of the present. The very vastness of the power which human science and invention have placed in the hands of men to-day creates

a temptation to individuals and to groups to betray the trust that society has placed in them, to play false to humanity, by seizing this power and degrading it to the base uses of group interest and individual ambition. As we look out on the world to-day the prospect is indeed disquieting. On the one side we see those who have gained, through the careful upbringing, ample education, and favorable surrounding which inherited wealth can provide, some appreciation of the higher life of intelligent companionship, who know books, and enjoy the best in art, and experience the delights of comradeship in worthy and inspiring tasks, but who are class-bound in social outlook; they profess an interest in all enterprises of social betterment but always with the understanding that they and their circle are retained in positions of affluence and advantage. On the other side are those who raise voices of passionate protest against a social and economic order which, by an unequal division of wealth, prevents the mass of mankind from sharing in the higher satisfactions of life. Inasmuch as this protest seems to arise from a genuine devotion to a wider social good, we listen with respect. But we are disillusioned when further enquiry into positive plans for reform discloses the fact that nothing more is contemplated than the seizure of the existing machinery in order that the product may be appropriated for the enjoyment of a class. If the war showed what irresistible power civilized nations might wield when associated by a common purpose, the succeeding years have indicated the comparative powerlessness of these nations when their counsels were divided and their purposes sullied by national exclusiveness and self-interest. And the war, by the premium which it placed upon the organizing ability of individuals in the industrial sphere has brought into greater prominence a baleful figure which had already cast its shadow across modern civilization—that of the profiteer, the commercial buccaneer, the individual with the ability to command and direct the complicated but powerful forces of our industrial and financial world and who uses this power with supreme effectiveness but with complete disregard of human right,

for the sake of his own enrichment and private pleasure.

Human society can save itself from the destructive forces that now threaten its integrity by employing the power which science and invention have won for it in the promotion of that universal good towards which the rational will of man is directed. This good consists, we now recognize, in increasing the range and fullness of communication among men and thus extending the opportunities of truly human development to the largest possible number. Idealistic philosophy can be of real help in making clear the principles that must govern the prosecution of this enterprise if it is to accomplish its purpose. Progress in the personal association of men requires, in the first place, an increased mutual understanding among individuals, among groups and classes, among races and nations. What is needed primarily is not that men should give one another information, but that they should use insight and imagination and exercise patience and consideration, in catching and understanding one another's points of view. Of course the spread of knowledge, particularly of the history and achievements of other peoples, predisposes men to such mutual understanding. When this basis of mutual understanding is secured, exchange of ideas can go forward; such discussion if it proceeds unhampered is certain to disclose a common interest. This common interest when discovered, will inevitably, develop into a community of purpose, and this in its turn will lead to genuine co-operation. When the conditions of co-operation are thus fulfilled, the next and second requirement for increased human association is the willingness to make actual experiments in co-operation. The quality here demanded is one of will, the courage to venture into new ground in the hope of a larger good. Men frequently fail to seize opportunities of wider comradeship because they wish to be assured in advance that the new association will return benefits commensurate with its cost in effort and disturbance of working arrangements. This is of course impossible; insistence upon it closes the door to further advance. Hence existing society tends to be deadlocked between the conservatives who are so attached to existing

institutions and arrangements that they are unwilling to see any innovation tried unless they have antecedent assurance (impossible in the nature of the case) that it will work better than the old which it interferes with or supplants, and the radicals who are so fascinated by the promise of the new and untried that they are ready to jeopardize or destroy with reckless abandon the very foundations of the existing order in its pursuit. What is needed is an attitude that avoids both of these extremes—the willingness, that is, to encourage and participate in wisely planned and sagaciously conducted experiments in wider and more thoroughgoing co-operation, experiments in profit-sharing, experiments in the nationalization of business and industry, experiments in vocational representation in government, experiments in international control. A third requirement for progress in human association, certain to be fulfilled in case intelligent co-operation proceeds successfully, is increased fellow-feeling or emotional accord among men. If, however, this fellow-feeling can be in a measure induced, in advance, it will encourage understanding and facilitate working-partnership; for it will give men an interest in one another and a desire to be mutually helpful. Hence society should solicitously foster all influences that tend to arouse and strengthen the underlying feeling of kinship among men, that deep sympathy with everything human which springs from a consciousness of similar aspirations and disillusionments and overleaps all barriers of race and caste and nationality. Of these influences the chief are *art* and *religion*. It is of vital importance to any plan for social advancement and human development that measures should be devised for their encouragement and extension. If men could learn to take pleasure not solely in what they possess and consume as individuals but in works of natural and created beauty whose enjoyment they share with others, they will feel a constantly widening sympathy with fellowmen in their weaknesses and frailties, as well as their accomplishments and virtues. And if men can come, through the offices of revealed religion, to regard all the personal relations of men as grounded in, and sustained by, the one inclusive

divine life that is unfolding in universal history, they will discover new interest and value in each human self, whose common clay is vehicle for a unique expression of the Divine Spirit who is Father of us all.

These principles have a special application, I venture to think, to a young nation occupying a new territory and building up its population from diverse stocks, and in some cases, different races. Permit me in conclusion to refer briefly to these nearer problems.

In the vigorous nations of the New World the development of material resources is the primary social concern; their social life is dominated, on the surface at least, by commercial and utilitarian interests. This is not to be wondered at; it is not to be altogether deplored. Mankind has learned anew from the bitter and costly experience of the past few years how thoroughly dependent the higher type of social life is upon the continuous production of material necessities and the efficient working of the machinery for their distribution; we have seen what we call culture and civilization almost entirely disappear from whole cities and populations in Europe due to the complete breakdown of the existing economic system. Social idealism need not therefore oppose the interest which prevails about us in the production of material commodities and the exploitation of natural resources; it is bound to urge however, that this great economic enterprise be carried forward in a genuinely social way. The issue is not, moreover, between what is ordinarily understood as individualism and socialism or collectivism in production or distribution. Considerations of promptness and efficiency in the developing of new sources for the supply of fundamental human needs will probably impel society to avail itself to the utmost in the future as it has done in the past, of the initiative, the inventiveness and the organizing abilities of talented individuals, and to guarantee a reward sufficient to call forth the highest grade of ability. The question is rather that of the spirit in which these leaders direct the great industrial enterprises coming under their control. If in their management they are always actuated by a sober and enlightened sense of social responsibility and associate

with themselves men of similar public spirit the great mass of workers employed in minor capacities can engage in a spirit of co-operation, sharing with their fellows the satisfaction which comes from participating in an enterprise that is meeting a fundamental social need in an efficient and worthy manner. But if those who own and direct conceive of the enterprise or business merely as a means of private profit, those whom they employ will look upon it merely as a source of wages; no common interest is created sufficiently strong to be the basis of personal association; a situation is engendered which is provocative of envy, discord, and social disruption.

Such a spirit of co-operation as this, conjoined with a sense of social responsibility, can arise in a nation only if the channels of communication between man and man are opened wide so that ideas may be freely exchanged and differing points of view fully revealed. If continuous discussion of this kind is to include all elements in a somewhat composite population, as it must to be effective in a democracy, it can be brought about only by universal education. It is not surprising, therefore, that every fresh crisis in the development of democratic institutions should remind us anew of the importance of education. Education is itself a process of communication whereby the quintessence of all that man has experienced is imparted to the student and he is trained in critical reflection upon, and discriminating use of, this material. The communication is primarily direct: the teacher can enliven and enforce his words by his personal presence and influence. But it is secondarily, and in a manner no less important, indirect: through the medium of books and records, history and science and literature, the student is introduced to the larger world-problems and is enabled to orientate himself and his community in the developing system of human relationships. For purposes of education in this second sense, it is scarcely possible to overestimate the importance of community of language. Words, are not to be looked upon as the incidental accompaniments of thought, the particular signs and symbols that happen to be convenient and available; they are rather, as we have seen, the

material embodiment, the flesh and blood, of which thought is the soul. If a leading purpose of education is to make social and national ideals clear, to show their development in history and their relation to essential human needs, how is this purpose to be realized unless the writings which alone unfold, in an adequate and authoritative manner, the growth of these ideals, are open to the study of all?

A true philosophy of social relationships is obliged thus to emphasize the necessity for unity of language and literary tradition if the ideals of democratic government are to be realized. When a basis of common understanding is thus secured it should be the purpose of education to prepare individuals to engage as persons in the social activities through which alone personality can find expression. This aim will be frustrated if education is allowed to develop along divergent lines, the one having exclusively in view culture in the traditional sense which moves in a higher sphere of the purely intellectual and esthetic, and the other seeking to train solely for industrial efficiency. The interests of industrial and political co-operation forbid us to set this gulf between the ideal and the actual; if the vast majority of men are to have any part in the realization of the higher values, personal and intellectual, it must be because they find such satisfaction in connection with their daily tasks. There is small danger, indeed, that in a new-world democracy we shall have an over-development of that kind of education whose supreme objective is the production of a type of personal culture which has social significance principally as a badge of class distinction. Much greater is the danger that education which is supported by a democratic commonwealth will become increasing utilitarian in its purpose, aiming at what is sometimes called "social efficiency" and measuring its success by the degree to which it increases the ability of the individual to add to the wealth of the state. In opposition to either of these aims, or to both of them combined, social idealism, when accepted as the governing principle in education must insist that the coming generations be trained to do useful work in society, but useful in the true

sense because inspired by a realizing insight into the world of personal relationships, an insight which transforms their daily duties from a routine necessary to continued existence and occasional enjoyment into a means of linking them in enduring relationships with their fellows in the social community, and of yielding satisfactions which, because rooted in personal understanding and fellowship and sympathy, have a depth and a fertility which impart enduring significance to human life.

One question lies behind all present perplexities, social, political, and economic; upon its answer depends all hope of solution and all promise of a brighter future. Do men by virtue of their intelligence, rational purpose, and susceptibility to the beautiful and the divine, constitute a personal community which is organized upon a different and higher plane than that of natural existence? If they do, there exists for them a good in which all can participate and their common reason may be expected to agree upon such a method for distributing material goods and political preferences as promises to yield to all the fullest understanding, comradeship and sympathy. But if they do not, and the human race is to be regarded as merely the most advanced of animal species, each of its members being driven by a necessity of his nature to seek in a limited lifetime the fullest satisfaction of his instinctive desires, there is nothing to be hoped for beyond protracted, relentless, struggle for the material means of natural enjoyment. It is in witness of man's abiding faith in his higher nature that universities like this are founded; to furnish a rational basis for this faith the teaching of philosophy finds its completest justification.

